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Registrar of Voters



REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

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Election Observer Panel Plan

(Revised 09-18-08)

I. County and System Information

- Sequoia Voting Systems' Edge II with Verivote and 400C central count optical scanners.

II. Purpose

The purpose of an Election Observer Panel is to:

- Provide the public with the opportunity to observe and make suggestions on ways to improve the election process.
- Help ensure the integrity of the election process.
- Remove some of the mystery associated with the election process in an effort to build voter confidence and encourage more people to take part.

III. Invite

Between E-60 and E-30, send out letters of invitation to the following:

- County Grand Jury
- Political Party Central Committee Members
- Advocacy Groups
- League of Women Voters
- Media

Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in observing Election Day activities may also, at the discretion of the Registrar of Voters, be included in the observer panel.

IV. Letters of Introduction

Election Observer Panelists will be given letters of introduction for presentation to precinct board members at a polling site. In addition, any group or individual desiring to be provided a letter of introduction may obtain one by providing the Registrar of Voters a signed written request no later than 10 days prior to Election Day. Polling place location information and hours of operation can be obtained from the Registrar of Voters website.

V. General Rules for Observers

Observers are responsible for:

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge.
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election processes.
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the elections process.

Observers MAY:

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the poll entrance.
- Upon request be permitted to observe and inspect, without physical contact, and in the presence of an Election Official, the integrity of all externally visible security seals used to secure voting equipment in a time and manner that does not interfere with the conduct of the election or the privacy of any voter.
- Make notes and watch all procedures.
- View all activities at the central counting site on Election Day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- View vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of staff at the polls.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site regarding election procedures.
- Be assigned a staff member to escort and assist the observer.
- Be directed to, and required to observe from, designated observation areas.
- Be limited due to available space. If an area is too small to accommodate interested observers, the Registrar of Votes will create a rotation schedule.

Observers May Not:

- Interfere in any way with the conduct of the election.
- Intimidate or impede, or attempt to intimidate or impede, in the judgment of a Riverside County Election Official, staff or voters in any way.
- Touch any voting materials or equipment, sit at the official worktables, or observe from within the “voting area.”
- Converse with voters (within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place), or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote.
- Interfere with the timely closing of polls or transportation of the ballots to the collection center or central counting site.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use cellular phones, pagers, two-way radios, cameras, audio or video recording devices, or camera phones inside the polling place and/or within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place.
- Roam or wander away from dedicated observation area(s). The Riverside County Registrar of Voters requires strict adherence and will not condone observers entering restricted areas.
- Talk to central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Use telephones, computers or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Make physical contact with staff.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place.

Operations will continue as scheduled whether or not an observer is present. Observers who do not adhere to the general rules provided by the Riverside County Registrar of Voters will be relieved from their duties on the Election Observer Panel.

VI. Mechanism for Feedback

Observers will be given a written overview of processes used in conducting the election and an approximate timeline as well as how to provide input to the ROV on their observations. Written Guidelines for Observer conduct and instructions on how to ask questions or seek clarification will be included.